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1016. 6. 33

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THE  
REMEDY  
OF  
DISCONTENTMENT:  
OR,  
A TREATISE OF  
CONTENTATION  
in whatsoever Condition:

Fit for these sad and troubled  
Times.

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By Jos. HALL D.D. and B. of N.

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Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever estate I am,  
therewith to be content.*

12. *I know both how to be aba'ed, and I know how to  
abound; Every where, and in all things I am in-  
structed both to be full and to be hungry, both to a-  
bound and to want.*

---

L O N D O N,  
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the Angel in Cornhill. 165

Margaret Girling





TO  
THE CHRISTIAN  
R E A D E R,

*Grace and Peace.*



That can be more  
seasonable, then  
when all the  
world is sick  
of Discontent-  
ment, to give Counsels and  
Receits of *Contentation*; Per-  
haps the Patient will think it  
a time ill chosen for phylick,  
in the midst of a Fit: But in  
this case we must doe as we  
may. I confesse, I had rather  
have staid till the Paroxym

## *To the Reader.*

were happily over; that so the humors being somewhat settled, I might hope for the more kindly operation of this wholesome medicine. But partly my age and weakness, despairing to out-live the publick distemper; and partly my judgement (crossing the vulgar opinion for the season of some kind of Receipts) have now put me upon this safe, and usefull prescription: God is my witness, that I wrote this in the depth of mine owne afflictions, (the particulars whereof, it were unreasonable to trouble the world withall) as one that meant to make my selfe my owne Patient, by enjoying my selfe that course of remedies, that I prescribe to others;

## *To the Reader.*

others; and, as one, who by the powerfull working of Gods Spirit within me, labor to find my heart framed to those holy dispositions which I wish & recommend to every Christian soul: If there be no remedy but the worst of outward troubles must afflict us; it shall be happy yet, if we may find inward peace in our bosomes: which shall be, if we can reconcile our selves to our offended God; and calme our spirits to a meeke undergoing of those sufferings which the divine Providence hath thought fit to measure forth unto us: This is the main drift of this ensuing labour. Now the same God, who hath, in these blustering times, put into my

A 3 heart.

## To the Reader.

heart these quiet thoughts of holy *Contentation*, bless them in every hand that shall receive them ; and make them effectual to the good of every soul, that shall now, and hereafter entertain them ; that so their gracious proficiency may in the day of the appearance of our Lord Jesus, add to the joy of my account ; Who am the unworthiest of the servants of God, and his Church,

J. N.

THE



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*What it is to know how to want, and to be abased.*

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How to abound.



THE  
R E M E D Y  
O F  
Discontentment.

S E C T. I.

*The excellency of Contentation; and how it is to be had.*



If there be any happiness to be found upon earth, it is in that which we call *Contentation*: This is a flower that growes not in every Garden: The great  
B Do-

Phil. 4. 11.

Ἐμαθον,  
Verse 12.  
μεμνημαι

Doctor of the Gentiles tels us that he had it; I have learned (saith he) in what estate soever I am therewith to bee content; I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Lo; he could not have taken out this lesson if hee had not learn'd it; and hee could not have learnt it of any other then his Master in heaven: What face soever Philosophy may set upon it, all Morality cannot reach it; neither could his learned *Gamaliel*, at whose feet he sat, have put this skill into him; no, he learn'd it since he was a Christian; and now professeth it; So as it appears, there is a divine art of *Contentation* to be attained

tained in the schoole of Christ; which whosoever hath learnt, hath taken a degree in Heaven, and now knows how to bee happy both in want, & abundance.

## S E C T. II.

*The contrariety of estates wherein Contentation is to be exercised.*

**T**He nature of man is extremely querulous; we know not what we would have, and when we have it, we know not how to like it: wee would be happy, yet wee would not dye; wee would live long, yet wee would not be old; wee would be kept in order,

B 2

yet

*Se sedens  
requies est  
magna la-  
boris; si  
multum se-  
dens, labor  
est. Tert.  
Carm.*

yet we would not bee cha-  
stised with affliction; we are  
loath to work, yet are weary  
of doing nothing; we have  
no list to stirre, yet find long  
sitting painfull; we have  
no minde to leave our bed,  
yet finde it a kinde of sick-  
nesse to lie long; we would  
marry, but would not be  
troubled with household  
cares; when once we are mar-  
ried, we wish we had kept  
single: If therefore grace have  
so mastered nature in us, as  
to render us content with  
whatever condition, we have  
attained to no small measure  
of perfection.

Which way soever the  
winde blowes, the skilfull  
Mariner knows how to turn  
his sailes to meete it; the  
con-



# Of Contentation.

5.

contrariety of estates to which wee lie open here, gives us different occasions for the exercise of *Contentation*: I cannot blame their choice, who desire a middle estate betwixt want and abundance, and to be free from those inconveniencies which attend both extreames: Wise *Solomon* was of this diet; *He me neither poverty nor riches; feede me with the foode of my meet allowance*: Loe, he that had all, desired rather to have but enough: And if any estate can afford contentment in this life, surely this is it, in the judgement and experience of the wisest Heathen. But forasmuch as this equall poise

*Prov. 30. 8*

*Senec. de Tranquil.*

is hardly attainable by any man, and is more proper for our wishes and speculation, then for our hopes: true wisdom must teach us so to compose our selves that wee may bee fit to entertain the discontentments, and dangers of those excesses, and defects, which wee cannot but meet with in the course of mortall life: And surely wee shall finde that both extreames are enemies to this good temper of the soule: prosperity may discompose us, as well as an adverse condition; The Sunshine may be as troublesome to the traveller, as the wind or raine; neither know I whether is more hard to manage of the two; a dejected

sted estate, or a prosperous ;  
whether we may be more  
incommodated with a resty  
horse, or with a tyred one :  
Let us beginne with that  
which nature is wont to  
think most difficult ; that  
contrary to the practice  
of learners, we may try to  
take out the hardest lesson  
first. Let us therefore learn  
in the first place how to  
want.

## S E C T. III.

*How many doe not know how  
to want.*

**C**ould we teach men  
how not to want, we  
should have Disciples e-  
now ; every man seeks to  
B 4 have

Pfal. 23. 1.

Pfal. 34. 9,  
10.

have, and hates to lacke :  
 could we give an Antidote  
 against poverty, it would  
 be too precious : And why  
 can we not teach men even  
 this lesson too : *The Lord  
 is my shepherd, saith David,  
 therefore can I lacke nothing;  
 and most sweetly elsewhere,  
 O feare the Lord ye that be  
 his Saints ; for they that  
 feare him, lacke nothing :  
 The Lions doe lacke and suf-  
 fer hunger, but they which  
 seek the Lord shall want no  
 manner of thing that is  
 good , Let God be true,  
 and every man a lyar : Cer-  
 tainly, if we were not wan-  
 ting to God in our feare of  
 him, in our faithfull reli-  
 ance upon him, in our con-  
 scionable seeking of him, he  
 whose*

whose the earth is, and the fulnesse of it, would not suffer our carefull endeavours to goe weeping away: But if it so fall out that his most wise providence findes it better for us to be held short in our worldly estate, (as it may be the great Physician sees it most for our health to be kept fasting) it is no lesse worth our learning to know how to want; For there is many a one that wants, but knowes not how to want, and therefore his need makes him both offensive and miserable.

There are those that are poore and proud; one of the wise mans three abominations; foolish *Laodiceans* that beare themselves for

B. 5.

rich

Eccles. 25.

7.

Rev. 3. 17.

rich, encreased with goods,  
and lacking nothing; when  
they are no other then  
wretched, and miserable,  
and poore, and blinde, and  
naked; These men know  
not how to want, their heart  
is too big for their purse; and  
surely pride, though every  
where odious, yet doth no  
where so ill as in rags.

There are those that are  
poor & envious; looking with  
an evill eye upon the better  
fare of others; as surely this  
vice dwels more commonly  
in Cottages than in Pala-  
ces. How displeasedly doth  
the beggar looke upon the  
larger almes of his neigh-  
bour; grudging to another  
what ever falls besides him-  
selfe, and mistaking his own  
dole

dole, because the next hath more; whose eye with the discontented labourers is evill, because his master is good; neither doe these men know how to want.

Mat. 20.  
15.

There are those that want distrustfully; measuring the mercifull prov. sion of the Almighty by the line of their owne sense; as the *Samaritane* Pere, when in the extremity of a present famine he heard the Prophet foretell a suddain plenty; Behold, if the Lord would make windowes in heaven, might this thing be?

2 Kings 7.  
2.

There are those that want impatiently; repining at Gods dealing with them, and making their own impotent anger guilty of a further

2 King. 6.  
33.

Rev. 16. 9.  
11.

further addition to their misery ; as the distressed King of *Israel*, in a desperate sense of that grievous dearth ; Behold, this evill is of the Lord, what should I waite on the Lord any longer ? And those wretched ones, who when the fourth Angel had poured out his Viall upon the Sun, being scorched with the extremity of the heate, blasphemed the God of heaven : In this kinde was that finfull techinesse of *Jonah* : when I see a poore worme that hath put it selfe out of the coole cell of the earth wherein it was lodged, and now being beaten upon by the Sun beames, lies wrigling upon the bare path,

tur-



turning it selfe every way in vaine; and not finding so much as the shade of a leaf to cover it; I cannot but think of that fretting Prophet, when wanting the protection of his gourd hee found himselfe scalded with that strong reflection; and looking up wrathfully towards that Sun from whom he smarted, could say to the God that made it, I doe well to be angry, even to the death.

Jonah 4.9.

Lastly, there are those that are poore and dishonest even out of the very suggestion of their want; It was the danger whereof that made Agur, the Son of Jakub pray against penury; Lest I be poore, and steal; and

Pro. 30. 2.

and (by forswearing it) take the name of God in vain.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Who they are that know how to want.*

**T**Hese and perhaps others doe and must want, but in the meane time they doe that which they know not how to doe; there is a skill in wanting which they have not; Those onely know how to want, that have learnt to frame their minde to their estate; like to a skilfull Musitian that can let downe his strings a peg lower when the tune requires it; or like to some cunning Spagirick, that can intend

intend or remit the heat of his furnace according to occasion. Those, who when they must bee abased, can stoope submissely, like to a gentle reed, which when the wind blowes stiffe, yeeldes every way; those that in an humble obedience can lay themselves low at the foote of the Almighty, and put their mouth in the dust; that can patiently put their necks under the yoke of the Highest; and can say with the Prophet, Truly this is my sorrow, and I must beare it; Those that can smile upon their afflictions, rejoycing in tribulation, singing in the Jail with *Paul* and *Silas* at midnight; Lastly those that  
can

Jer. 18. 19.

can improve misery to an advantage, being the richer for their want, bettered with evils, strengthened with infirmities; and can truly say to the Almighty, I know that of very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me: Never could they have come out of pure metall, if they had not passed under the hand of the Refiner; never had they proved so toward Children, if they had not been beholden to the rod: These are they that know how to want, and to be abased; and have effectually learned to be content with the meanest condition: to which happy temper that we may attaine, there will be use of, 1. Certain Considerations,

rations ; 2. Certaine dispositions ; and 3. Certain Resolutions ; These three shall be as the grounds, and rules of this our Divine Art of *Contentation*.

## S E C T. V.

*The Consideration of the fickleness of life, and all earthly commoditie.*

**T**HE first Consideration shall be of the just valuation of all these Earthly things ; which doubtlesse is such, as that the wise Christian cannot but set a low price upon them, in respect, first, of their transitorinesse ; secondly, of their insufficiency of satisfaction ; thirdly,

ly, the danger of their fruition.

At the best, they are but glassie stuffe, which the finer it is, is so much more brittle; yea, what other then those gay bubbles, which Childdren are wont to raise from the mixed sope and spittle of their Walnut-shell, which seeme to represent pleasing colours, but in their flying up instantly vanish? There is no remedy; either they must leave us, or we must leave them. Well may we say that of the *Psalmist*, which *Campion* was reported to have often in his mouth; My soule is continually in my hands; and who knows whether it will not expire in our next breathing?

thing? How many have shut their eyes in an healthfull sleep, who have waked in another VWorld? VVee give too large scope to our account, whiles we reckon seven yeares for a Life; a shorter time wil serve; whiles wee finde the revolution of lesse than half those yeares to have dispatched \* five *Cæsars*, and five *Popes*; nay, who can assure himselfe of the next moment? It is our great weaknesse, if wee doe not looke upon every day, as our last; why should wee thinke our selves in a better condition, then the chosen vessell, \* who deeply protested to dye dayly? What a poore complaint was that of the great Conquerour of the

\* *Galba*  
*Otho*  
*Vitellius*  
*ÆL. Pertinax.*  
*Didlius.*  
*An. D.*  
 1275. }  
 1276. }  
*Gregor. 10.*  
*Innocent. 5.*  
*Hadrian 5*  
*Johan. 20*  
*vel 11.*  
*Nicolaus 3*  
 \* 1 Cor.  
 15. 3<sup>h</sup>

The Jewes, *Titus Vespasian*, who putting his head out of his sick litter, querulously accused Heaven, that hee must dye, and had not deserved it; when hee might have found it guilt enough that he was a man; and therefore by the very sentence of nature condemned, I know not whether to live, or dye.

Indeed, what can we cast our eyes upon, that doth not put us in minde of our frailty? All our fellow-creatures dye for us, and by us: The day dyes into night; the trees, and all other plants of the Earth suffer a kinde of Autumnall mortality; the face of that common Mother of us all, doth at the least



least in Winter, resemble Death; But if the Angell of Death (as the Jewes terme him) shall respite, and reprieve us of the time; alas! how easily may we have over-lived our comforts? If Death doe not snatch us away from them, how many thousand meanes of casualties, of enemies, may snatch them away from us? Hee that was the greatest man of all the Sonnes of the East, within a few dayes became a spectacle and proverb of penury, which still sticks by him, and so shall doe to the worlds end, *As poore as Iob.*

The rich Plaine of *Iordan*, which over-night was as the Garden of the Lord,

is

Gen. 15.  
10.

Deut. 29.  
23.

Pro. 23, 5.

is in the morning covered over with brimston, and salt, and burning: VVilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not? Saith wise *Solomon*: For Riches certainly make themselves wings, they flye away as an Eagle towards Heaven: if we have wings of desire to fly after them, they are nimbler of flight to outstrip us, and leave us no lesse miserable in their losse, then wee were eager in their pursuite.

As for Honour, what a meere shadow it is: upon the least cloud interposed, it is gone, and leaves no mention where it was: The same Sun sees *Haman* adored in the Persian Court, like some earthly Deiry; and like  
some

some base vermine waving  
upon his Gibbet: Doe we  
see the great, and glorious  
*Cleopatra*, shining in the  
pompous Majesty of *Egypt*?  
stay but a while, and yee  
shall see her in the dust, and  
her two Children, whom  
shee proudly stiled the Sun,  
and the Moon, driven like  
miserable Captives, before  
the Chariot of their Con-  
querour: Man being in ho-  
nour abideth not, saith the  
*Psalmist*, he perisheth, but  
his greatnesse (as more frail  
then he) is oftentimes dead  
and buryed before him, and  
leaves him the surviving ex-  
ecutor of his owne shame.

Psal. 49. 12

It was easie for the cap-  
tive Prince, to observe in  
the Charet-wheele of his  
Victor,

Victor, that when one spoak rose up, another went down, and both these in so quick a motion, that it was scarce distinguished by the Eye.

*Ludo. Vi-  
ves in 3.  
De Civit.  
censurâ no-  
tatus Vel-  
lofillo.*

Well therefore may wee say of Honour, as *Ludovicus Vives* said of Scholasticall Divinity. *Cui fumus est pro fundamento*: It is built upon smoak, how can it bee kept from vanishing?

As for Beauty, what is it, but a dash of Natures tincture laid upon the skinne, which is soone washt off with a little sicknesse? what but a faire blossome, that drops off, so soon as the fruit offers to succede it? what but a flower, which with one hot Sun gleam weltreth and fals? He that had the choyce

choyce of a thousand Faces,  
could say, Favour is deceit-  
full, and Beauty is Vanity.

Prov. ult.  
penult.

Lastly, for Strength,  
and vigour of Body, if it  
could be maintained till our  
old age, alas, how soone is  
that upon us, ere we be a-  
ware ! how doth it then shri-  
vell our flesh, and loosen our  
sinews, and cripple our  
joynts ! *Milo*, when hee  
lookt upon his late brawny  
armes, and saw them now  
growne lanke and writhled,  
lets fall tears, and bewraies  
more weaknesse of minde,  
then hee had before bodily  
strength; but how often doth  
sicknesse prevent the debi-  
litations of age ; pulling the  
strongest man upon his  
knees, and making him con-  
fesse,

C

fesse,

Ecclef. 11.  
10.

teffe, that youth, as well as child-hood is Vanity.

As for pleasure it dyes in the birth, and is not therefore worthy to come into this bill of Mortality.

Mat 6. 28.

Do we then upon sad consideration see and fee the manifest transitoriness of Life, Riches, Honour, Beauty, Strength, Pleasure, and what ever else can be deare and precious to us in this world, and can we dote upon them so as to be too much dejected with our parting from them? Our Saviour bids us consider the Lillies of the field; And he that made both, tels us, that *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these: Surely full well are they worth

worth our considering. But if those Beauties could be as permanent, as they are glorious, how would they carry away our hearts with them? Now their fading condition justly abates of their value; would wee not smile at the weaknesse of that man that should weep and howle, for the falling of this Tulip, or that Rose, abandoning all comfort for the losse of that, which hee knowes must flourish but his moneth? It is for Children to cry for the falling of their house of Cards, or the miscarriage of that painted gewgaw, which the next showre would have defaced. Wise Christians know how to appraise good things according

ding to their continuance; and can therefore set their hearts only upon the invifible Comforts of a better Life, as knowing that the things which are not feen, are Eternall.

#### S E C T. VI.

*Confideration of the unsatisfying condition of all worldly things.*

**B**UT were thefe earthly things exempted from that ficklenesse, which the God of Nature hath condemned them unto, were they (the very memory whereof perisheth with their satiety) as lasting as they are brittle: yet what comfort



fort could they yeeld for the Soule to rest in? Alas! their efficacy is too short to reach unto a true *Contentation*; yea, if the best of them were perpetuated unto us, upon the fairest conditions, that this Earth can allow, how intollerable tedious would it prove in the fruition? Say that God were pleased to protract my life to the length of the age of the first founders of Mankind, and should (in this state of body) adde hundreds of yeares to the dayes of my pilgrimage: Woe is mee, how weary should I bee of my selfe, and of the World? I, that now complaine of the load of seventy one yeares, how should I be

tired out, ere I could arrive at the age of *Parre*? but before I could climb up to the third Century of *Iohannes de Temporibus*, how often should I call for death, not to take up, but to take off my burthen, and with it, my selfe? But if any, or all these earthly blessings could be freed from those grievances, wherewith they are commonly tempered, yet how little satisfaction could the Soule finde in them? What are these outward things, but very luggage, which may load our backs, but cannot lighten our Hearts? Great, and wise *Solomon*, that had the full command of them all, cries out, Vanity of Vanities; and a greater Mo-

Monarch then hee, shuts up the Scene with, I have been all things, and am never the better: All these are of too narrow an extent, to fill the capacious soule of Man; the desires whereof are enlarged with injoying, so as the more it hath, the lesse it is satisfied, neither indeed can it be otherwise; The Eye, and the Eare, are but the Purveyors for the Heart, if therefore the eye be not satisfied with seeing, nor the eare with hearing, how shall the heart say, It is enough? Now, who would suffer himselfe to be too much disquieted with the losse of that which may vex him, but cannot content him? Wee doe justly smile at the folly

Eccles 1.8

folly of that vaine Lord, of whom *Petrarch* speaks, who when an Horse which hee dearly loved, was sicke, laid that Steed of his, on a silken bed, with a wrought pillow under his head, and caused himselfe (then afflicted with the Gout) to bee carried on his servants shoulders to visit that deare patient ; and upon his deccase, mourned solemnly for him, as if it had beene his Son. We have laught at the fashion of the Girles of *Holland*, who having made to themselves gay and large Babies, and laid them in a curious cradle, faine them to sicken and die, and celebrate their funerall with much passion: So fond are wee if wee have framed

med to our selves imaginary Contentments here, in the World, we give way to immoderate griefe in their miscarriage.

## SECT. VII.

*The danger of the love of these earthly comforts.*

**N**either are these earthly comforts more defective in yeelding full satisfaction to the soule, then dangerous in their over-dear fruition: For too much delight in them, robs us of more solid Contentments; The World is a cheating gamester, suffering us to win at the first, that at last he may go away withall. Our

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very

Pl. 69.22.

very Table may bee made our snare; and those things which should have beene for our wealth, may be unto us an occasion of falling: *Leo* the fourth Emperour of *Constantinople*, delighted extremely in precious stones, with these hee embelishes his Crowne, which being worne close to his Temples, strikes such a cold into his head, that causeth his bane: yea, how many with the too much love of these outward things have lost, not their lives onely, but their Soules? No man can be at once the Favourite of God and the World; as that Father said truly: or as our Saviour in fuller termes, No man can serve two Masters,

sters, GOD and Mammon :  
Shortly the VWorld may be  
a dangerous enemy , a sure  
friend it cannot be.

If therefore we shall like  
wise men, value things at  
their due prizes, since wee  
are convinced in our selves,  
that all these earthly com-  
forts are so transitory in  
their Nature, so unsatisfy-  
ing in their use, and so dan-  
gerous in their enjoying,  
how little reason have wee  
to bee too much affected  
with forgoing them ? Our  
bloud is deare to us, as that  
wherein our life is, yet if  
wee finde that it is either in-  
fected, or distempered, we  
doe willingly part with it  
in hope of better health ;  
How much more, with  
those

those things, which are farther from us, and lesse concerning us.

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S E C T. VIII.

*Consideration of the Divine  
Providence ordering all e-  
vents.*

**T**He second Consideration is of that All-wise Providence which ordereth all events both in Heaven and Earth, allotting to every Creature his due proportion, so over-ruling all things to the best, that wee could not want, if hee knew it better for us to abound: This Station he hath set us in, this measure hee hath shared out to us, whose will is



is the rule of good ; what we have therefore, cannot but be best for us. The World is a large Chesse-board, every man hath his place assigned him : one is a King, another a Knight, another a Pawn , and each hath his severall motion : without this variety, there could be no game played ; A skilfull Player will not stirre one of these Chips, but with intention of an advantage ; neither should any of his men either stand, or move, if in any other part of that Checker, it might be in more hope to win.

There is no estate in this World which can bee universally good for all ; one mans meat may be another  
mans

mans medicine, and a third mans poyson ; A Turk finds health and temper in that Opium, which would put one of us into our last sleep. Should the Plough-man be set to the Gentlemans fare, this Chicken, that Partridge or Pheasant, would (as oversight food) bee too soone turned over, and leave his empty stomach to quarrell for stronger provision : Beef is for his Dyer ; and if any sauce needes besides his hunger, Garlick : every man hath, as a body, so a minde of his owne ; what one loves is abhorred of another ; the great House-keeper of the world knowes how to fit every palate with that which either is, or should be agreeable

able to it, for salubriety, if not for pleasure: Lay before a Child a Knife, and a Rod, and bid him take his choice, his hand will be straight upon that edge toole, especially, if it be a little gilded, and glittering; But the Parent knowes the Rod to be more safe for him, and more beneficiall: We are ill carvers for our selves, he that made us, knowes what is fit for us, either for time, or measure, without his Providence not an haire can fall from our heads; We would have bodily health, I cannot blame us, what is the World to us without it? He whose we are, knowes sickness to bee for the health of the Soule; whether should we  
in

in true judgement desire? we wish to live, who can blame us? life is sweet, but if our Maker have ordained, that nothing but Death can render us glorious, what madnesse is it to stick at the condition? Oh our grosse infidelity, if we doe not beleieve that great Arbiter of the World, infinitely wise to know what is best for us, infinitely mercifull to vwill what he knowes best, infinitely powerfull to do what he will! And if wee be thus perswaded, how can we, but in matter of good, say with blessed *Mary*; Behold thy Servant, be it unto me according to thy Word; And in matter of evill, with good *Eli*: It is the

the Lord, let him doe what he will :

## S E C T. IX.

*Consideration of the worse condition of others.*

**I**N the third place, it will be requisite for us to cast our eyes upon the worse condition of others, perhaps better deserving then our selves ; for if we shall whine & complaine of that weight, which others doe run away chearfully withall, the fault will appeare to be not in the heavinessse of the load, but in the weaknesse of the bearer : If I be discontented with a meane dwelling, another man lives merrily in  
a

Dan. 1. 12.  
13.

a thatched Cottage; If I dislike my plaine fare, the four captive children feed faire and fat with pulse and water. If I be plundred of my rich suites, I see a more chearfull heart under a russet Coat, then great Princes have under purple Robes: If I doe gently languish upon my sick-bed, I see others patient under the torments of the Colick, or Stone, or Strangury: If I be clapt up within four walls, I heare *Petronius* professe, hee had rather be in prison with *Cato*, then at liberty with *Cæsar*: I heare *Paul* and *Silas* sing like Nightingales in their cages: Am I sad, because I am childlesse? I heare many a parent wish him-

himselfe so: Am I banished from my home? I meet with many of whom the world was not worthy, wandring about in sheep-skins, in Goat-skins, in desarts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of earth: What am I that I should speed better then the miserablest of these patients? What had they done, that they should fare worse then I? If I have little, others have lesse; If I feele paine, some others, torture: If their sufferings be just, my forbearances are mercifull; my provisions, to theirs, liberall: It is no ill councell therefore, and not a little conducing to a contented want, that great persons should sometimes step aside

Heb. 11.  
38.

aside into the homely Cottages of the poore, and see their meane stufte, course fare, hard lodgings, worthlesse utensils, miserable shifts; and to compare it with their owne delicate and nauseating superfluities: Our great and learned King *Alfred* was the better all his life after, for his hidden retirednesse in a poore Neat-heards Cabin, where he was sheltered, and sometimes also chidden by that homely Dame: Neither was it an ill wish of that wise man, that all great Princes might first have had some little taste, what it is to want, that so their own experience might render them more sensible of the com-



complaints of others.

Man, though he be absolute in himselfe, and stand upon his owne bottome, yet he not a little wrought upon by examples, and comparisons with others, for in them he sees what he is, or may be, since no events are so confined to some speciall subjects, as that they may not be incident to other men.

Merits are a poor plea for any mans exemption, whiles our sinfull infirmities, lay us all open to the rod of divine Justice: and if these dispensations be meere out of favour, why doe I rather grudge at a lesser misery, then blesse God for my freedom from a greater judgement?

ment? Those therefore that suffer more then I, have cause of more humbling, and I that suffer lesse then they have cause of more thankfulnesse; even mitigations of punishment are new mercies, so as others torments doe no other then heighten my obligations; Let me not therefore repine to be favourably miserable.

### S E C T. X.

*Consideration of the inconveniences of great estates: & first of their cares, that they expose us to envy, and then macerate us with cares.*

**T**He fourth Consideration shall be of the inconveniences

niences which doe oftentimes attend a fulnesse of estate ; such, and so many as may well make us sit down content with a little; whereof, let the first be Envie : a mischief not to be avoided of the great ; This shadow follows that body inseparably ; all the curs in the street are ready to fall upon that dogge that goes away with the bone ; and every man hath a Cudgell to fling at a wel-loaded Tree ; whereas a meane condition is no eye-fore to any beholder ; Low shrubs are not wont to be stricken with Lightning, but tall Oakes and Cedars feele their flames ; Whiles David kept his fathers sheepe at home, he might sing sweetly

sweetly to his Harp in the fields, without any disturbance: But when hee once comes to the Court, and findes applause, and greatnesse creep upon him, now emulation, despight and malice, dog him close at the heeles, wheresoever he goes: Let him leave the Court and flee into the Wildernesse, there these bloud-hounds follow him in hot suit; Let him run into the Land of the *Philistims*, there they finde him out, and chase him to *Ziklag*; and if at the last, he hath climbed up to his just Throne, and there hopes to breath him after his tedious pursuit, even there he meets with more unquietnesse then

then in his desert, and notwithstanding all his Royalty, at last cries out, Lord remember *David*, and all his troubles: How many have we knowne whom their wealth hath betraid, and made innocent malefactors: who might have slept securely upon a hard bolster, and in a poore estate out-lived both their Judges, and Accusers. Besides, on even ground a fall may be harmlesse; but he that falls from on high, cannot escape bruising: He therefore that can think the benefits of Eminence can countervaile the dangers which haunt greatness, let him affect to overtop others; for me, let me rather be safely low, then  
D high

Psal. 132. 1

G. Naz.  
Carm. de  
calam. suis.

high with perill : After others envy, the next attendant upon greatnesse is our own cares, how do these disquiet the Beds, and sawce the Tables of the wealthy ? breaking their sleeps, galling their sides, embittering their pleasures, shortning their dayes : How bitterly do we finde the holiest men complaining of those distractions, which have attended their earthly promotions ? *Naxianzen* cries out of them as no other then the bane of the Soule, and that other *Gregory*, whom we are wont to call the last of the best Bishops of Rome, and the first of the bad, passionately bewailes this clogge of his high preferment : I confesse

fesse, faith he, that whiles I am outwardly advanced, I am inwardly fallen lower: this burdensome honour depresses me, and innumerable cares disquiet me on all sides; my minde (grown almost stupid with those temporall cares which are ever barking in mine eares) is forced upon earthly things; thus he: There are indeed cares which as they may be used, may help us on towards Heaven; such as *Metancthon* owns to his *Cammerarius*; My cares, faith he, send me to my prayers, and my prayers dispell my cares; but those anxieties which commonly wait upon greatness; distract the mind, and impair the body.

Greg. l. 7.  
Epi. 12.7.

In vita  
Metanct.

*Shicardus.*

It is an observation of the Jewish Doctors, that *Ioseph* the Patriarch was of a shorter life then the rest of his brethren; and they tender this reason of it, for that his cares were as much greater, as his place was higher: It was not an unfit comparison of him, who resembled a Coronet upon the Temples, to a paille upon the head; We have seen those, who have carryed full and heavy vessels on the top of their heads, but then they have walked evenly, and erect under that load; we never saw any that could dance under such a weight; if either they bend, or move vehemently, all their carriage is spilled: Earthly greatness



nesse is a nice thing, and requires so much chariness in the managing, as the contentment of it cannot requite; He is worthy of honey, that desires to lick it off from thornes; for my part, I am of the minde of him who professed, not to care for those favours, that compelled him to lie waking.

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S E C T. XI.

*Danger of distemper, both bodily and spirituall, that commonly followes great meanes: and torment in parting with them.*

**I**N the next place, I see greatnesse not more pale  
D 3 and

and worne with cares, then  
swoln up, and sickly with  
excesse; Too much oyle  
poured in, puts out the  
Lamp; Superfluity is guilt-  
ty of a world of diseases,  
which the spare diet of po-  
verty is free from; How  
have we seene great mens  
eyes surfeited at that full  
Table, whereof their palate  
could not taste, and they  
have risen discontentedly  
glutted with the sight of  
that, which their stomach  
was incapable to receive;  
and when, not giving so  
much law to nature, as to  
put over their gluttonous  
meal, (their wanton appe-  
tite charging them with a  
new variety of curious  
morsels, and lavish cups)  
they

they finde themselves overtaken with feverous distempers, the Physitian must succeed the Cook; and a second sicknesse must cure the first: But alas, these bodily indispositions are nothing to those spirituall evils, which are incident into secular greameffe. It is a true word of Saint *Ambrose*, seconded by common experience, that an high pitch of honour is seldome held up without sinne; And St. *Jerome* tells us, it was a common Proverb in his time, That a rich man either is wicked, or a wicked mans Heir: Not, but that rich *Abraham* may have a bosome for poor *Lazarus* to rest in, and many great Kings

*Ambros. l. 4  
Epist. 29.*

*Hieron. Ep.  
ad Hedibium.*

1 Tim. 6.

Kings have been great Saints in Heaven, and there is still roome for many more ; but that commonly great temptations follow great estates, and oftentimes overtake them ; neither is it for nothing, that riches are by our blessed Saviour, styled, The Mammon of iniquity ; and wealth is by the holy Apostle branded with deceitfulness ; such as cheat many millions of their Souls.

Adde unto these (if you please) the torment of parting with that pelf, and honour, which hath so grossly bewitched us ; such as may well verifie that which *Lucius* long since wrote to the Bishops of *France*, and *Spain*, That one houres mischief makes

Ep. Lucii  
ad Episc.  
Gall. &  
Hisp.

makes us forget the pleasure of the greatest excesse. I marvell not at our English Jew, of whom our story speakes, that would rather part with his teeth, then his baggs: how many have we knowne that have poured out their life together with their gold, as men that would not out-like their earthen god; yea, (woe is me) how many soules have been lost in the sin of getting, and in the quarrell of leeing this thick clay, as the Prophet tearmes it? But lastly, that wick is yet the forest of all the inconveniences, is the sadnesse of the reckoning, which must come in after these plentifull entertainments; for there is none

of all our cares here, but must be billed up; and great Accompts must have long Audits: how hard a thing it is in this case, to have an *Omnia aequè* ? In the failing whereof, how is the Conscience affected ? I know not whether more tormented, or tormenting the miserable soul, so as the great Owner is but (as witty *Bremiard* compares him) like a weary Jade, which all the day long hath beene labouring under the load of a great treasure; and at night lies down with a galled back.

By that time therefore we have summed up all, and finde here envy, cares, sicknesses both of body & soul; torment in parting with, and  
more

more torment in reckoning for these earthly greatnesses; we shall be convinced of sufficient reason to be well apaid with their want.

## S E C T. XII.

### *Consideration of the benefits of Poverty.*

**L**ET the fifth Consideration be, the benefit of Poverty; such, and so great as are enough to make us in love with having nothing.

For first, what an advantage is it, to be free from those gnawing cares, which (like *Tityus* his Vulture) feed upon the Heart of the great? Here is a man that sleeps

(*Athi*

(*Æthiopian* like) with his doores open; no dangers threaten him, no feares break his rest; he starts not out of his bed at midnight, and cries, Theeves! he feels no wrack of ambitious thoughts, he frets not at the disappointment of his false hopes, he cracks not his brain with hazardous plots, he mis-doubts no undermining of emulous rivalls, no traps of hollow friendship, but lives securely in his homely Cottage, quietly enjoying such provision as nature, and honest industry furnish him withall; for his drink, the neighbour Spring saves him the charge of his Excise; and when his better earnings have

fraught



fraught his trencher with a warm and pleasing morsell, and his cup with a stronger liquor, how chearfully is he affected with that happy variety ; and in the strength of it digests many of his thinner meales ?

Meales usually sawced with an healthfull hunger, wherein no incocted Crudities oppress Nature , and cherish disease: Here are no Gouts, no Dropfics, no Hypochondriack passions, no Convulsive fits, no distempers of surfets, but a cleare, and wholsom vigour of body, and an easie putting over the light tasks of digestion, to the constant advantage of health.

And as for outward dangers,

gers, what an happy immunity doth commonly blesse the poore man? How can he feare to fall, that lies flat upon the ground? The great Pope, *Boniface* the seventh, when he saw many stately Buidings ruined with Earthquakes, is glad to raise him a little Cabin of boards in the midst of a Meadow, and there findes it, safest to shelter his triple Crowne. When great men hoist their Topsaile, and launch forth into the deep, having that large clew which they speard, expos'd to all windes, and weathers, the poore man sailes close by the Shore; and when he foresees a storme to threaten him, puts into the next Creek;

Creek, and weares out in a quiet security that Tempest; wherein he sees prouder Vessels miserably tost, and at last, fatally wracked,

This man is free from the perill of spightfull machinations; No man whets his Axe to cut downe a shrub, it is the large Timber of the world that hath cause to feare hewing: Neither is he lesse free inwardly from the galling stroaks of a selfe-accusing Conscience; here is no remurmuring of the heart for guilty subornations, no checks for the secret contrivances of publique villanies; no heart-breaking for the failings of bloody designs, or late remorse for their successe; but  
quiet,

quiet, and harmless thoughts of seasonable frugality, of honest recreation, with an un-interrupted freedom of recourse to Heaven.

And if at any time, by either hostile, or casuall meanes, he be bereft of his little, he smiles in the face of a Thief; and is no whit astonished to see his thatch on a flame, as knowing how easie a supply will repaire his loss.

And when he shall come to his last close, his heart is not so glewed to the world, that he should be loath to part; his soul is not tyed up in baggs, but flies out freely to her everlasting Rest. Oh the secret vertue and happinesse of Poverty; which

which none but the right disposed minde knowes how to value ! It was not for nothing that so many great Saints have embraced it, rather then the rich proffers of the world ; That so many great Princes have exchanged their Thrones for quiet Cels ; Who so cannot be thankfull for a little, upon these conditions , I wish he may be punished with abundance.

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S E C T. XIII.

*Considering how little will suffice Nature.*

**N**either will it a little a-  
vaile to the furtherance  
of our *Contentation*, to con-  
sider how little will suffice  
Na-

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Nature, and that all the rest is but matter of Opinion : It is the Apostles charge, Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content : Indeed what use is there. of more then what may nourish us within, and cover us without ? If that be wholesome, and agreeable to our bodily disposition, whether it be fine, or course, Nature passes not ; it is meerly Will that is guilty of this wanton, and fastidious choice ; It is fit that Civility should make difference of clothings, and that weaknesse of body, or eminence of Estate should make differences of diets ; Else, why not Russet as well as Scarlet ? Beef, as Pheasant ? the Grasshopper feedes on dew,

dew, the Chameleon on air, what care they for other Viands? Our Books tell us, that those *Anachorets* of old, that went aside into Wildernes-  
ses, and sustained themselves with the most spare diet, such as those desarts could afford, out-lived the date of other mens lives, in whom Nature is commonly stifled with a gluttonous variety: How strong, and vigorous above their neighbour Gre-  
cians, were the Lacedemo-  
nians held of old? who by the Ordinance of their Law-giver, held themselves to their black broth, which when *Dionysius* would needs taste of, his Cook truly told

*Antonio monachum, de Paulo agente jam esse alium se sanctiorem Monachum, ibid.*

*Paulo primo Eremita in spelunca viventi palma & cibum & vestimentum prebebat; quod cum impossibile videretur, Iesum testor & Angelos vidisse me Monachos de quibus unus per 30. annos clausus, hordeaceo pane & lutulenta aqua vixit. Hieron. de vita Pauli. Revelatur*

*113. annum,*

him,

him, that if he would relish that fare, he must exercise strongly, as they did, and wash in *Eurotas*: Who knowes not that our Island doth not afford more able Bodies, then they that eate, and drinke Oates? And whom have we seene more healthfull and active, then the children of poore men, trained up hardly in their Cottages, with fare as little, as course?

Doe I see a poore Indian husbanding one tree to all his household uses; finding in that one Plant, Timber, Thatch, Meate, Medicine, Wine, Honey, Oyle, Sauce, Drinke, Utensils, Ships, Cables, Sailes? and doe I rove over all the latitude of Nature



ture for contentment? Our appetite is truly unreasonable, neither will know any bounds: Wee begin with necessaries, as *Pliny* justly observes, and from thence we rise to excess, punishing our selves with our own wild desires; whereas, if we were wise, we might finde mediocrity an ease.

*Plin. l. 26.  
c. 6.*

Either extreame is alike deadly; he that over-afflicts his body, kills a Subject; he that pampers it, nourishes an Enemy. Too much abstinence turnes vice, and too much ingurgitation is one of the seven, and at once destroyes both Nature and Grace. The best measure of having or desiring, is not what we would, but what we

*Hugo. In-  
sit. Monac.  
Reg. S. Co-  
lumb.*

*Senec. E-  
pist. 88.*

wee ought: Neither is hee rich that hath much; but hee that desireth not much: A discreet frugality is fittest to moderate both our wishes, and expences; which if we want, wee prove dangerously prodigall in both; if we have, we doe happily improve our stock to the advantage of our selves, and others.

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S E C T. XIV.

*Considering the inconveniences, and miseries of discontentment.*

**T**He next inducement to *Contentation*, shall bee the serious consideration of the miserable inconveniences

ces of the contrary disposition; Discontentment is a mixture of anger, and of grief; both which are wont to raise up fearfull tempests in the Soule; Hee teareth himselfe in his anger, saith *Bildad*, concerning that mirror of patience; And the sorrow of the World worketh death, saith the chosen vessell: so as the Male-content, whether hee be angry or sad, mischieves himselfe both wayes; There cannot be a truer word then that of wise *Solomon*, Anger resteth in the bosome of fooles; What can be more foolish then for a man, because he thinks God hath made him miserable by crosses, to make himself more miserable by his

Job 18. 4.

Eccles. 7. 9.

his owne distempers ; If the clay had sense, what a mad thing were it for it to struggle with the Potter : and if a man will spurne against strong Iron pikes, what can he hope to carry away but wounds ? How witleffe a thing it is for a man to torment himselfe with the thoughts of those evils, that are past all remedy : What wise beholder would not have smiled with pity and scorn, to have seen great *Augustus*, after the defeat of some choyce troopes, to knock his head against the Wall, and to heare him passionately cry out ; *O Varus*, restore me my lost Legions ! Who would not have beene angry with that cholerick  
Pro-

Prophet to heare him so furiously contest with his marker for a withered Gourd? What an affliction was it to good *Jacob* (more then the sterility of a beloved wife) to heare *Rachel* say; Give me children, or else I dye? yea, how ill did it sound in the mouth of the Father of the faithfull; Lord God, what wilt thou give mee, seeing I goe childlesse? Yet thus forward and techy is nature in the best; if wee may not have all wee would have, all that we have is nothing; if we be not perfectly humored, we are wilfully unthankfull; All *Israel* is nothing worth to *Abab*, if hee may not have one poore Vineyard: How  
E must

Gen. 30, 1.

Gen. 15, 2.

must this needes irritate a munificent God to see his bounty contemned out of a childish pettishnesse? How can he forbear to take away from us his sleighted mercies? How can he hold his hand from plaguing so ingrategfull disrespects of his favours?

As for that other passion of grief, what wofull worke doth it make in ungoverned mindes? How many have wee knowne that out of thought for unrecoverable losses, have lost themselves? how many have run from their wits? how many from their lives? Yea, how many, that out of an impatience to stay the leasure of vengeance, have made their own

own hands, their hasty executioners : And even where this extremity prevailes not; looke about, and yee shall see men that are not able matches to their passions, wofully macerating themselves with their owne thoughts, wearing out their tedious dayes upon the rack of their owne hearts, and making good that observation of the wise man; By the sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken.

Pro. 15. 13

Now all these mischiefs might have beene happily prevented by a meek yeeldance of our selves to the hands of an all-wise, & an all-mercifull God, and by an humble composure of our affections to a quiet suffering;

Pfal. 37. 7.  
Jam. 5. 7.

ring; It is the power of patience to calm the heart in the most blustering trials; and when the vessell is most tossed, yet to secure the freight: This, if it doe not abate of our burden, yet it addes to our strength, and vvins the Father of Mercies both to pity, and retribution.

Jer. 12. 8.

Whereas murmuring *Israelites* can never bee free from judgements; and it is a dreadfull word that God speaketh of that chosen Nation; Mine heritage is unto mee as a Lion in the forest; it, still, yelleth against mee, therefore have I heard it. A Childe that struggles under the rod, justly doubles his stripes, and  
an



an unruly Malefactor draws on, besides Death, tortures.

S E C T. XV.

*Consider the vicissitudes of favours and afflictions.*

**F**urthermore, it is a main help towards *Contentation*, to consider the gracious vicissitudes of Gods dealing with us: How hee intermixes favours with his crosses; tempering our much honey, with some little gall; the best of us are but shrewd children, yet hee chides us not alwayes, saith the *Psalmist*: hee smiles often, for one frown; and why should we not take one with another?

Pl. 10. 3. 9.

Job 2. 10.

ther? It was the answer wherewith that admirable pattern of patience stopped the querulous mouth of his tempting wife; *What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

It was a memorable example which came lately to my knowledge of a worthy Christian, who had lived to his middle age in much health, and prosperity, and was now for his two last yeares miserably afflicted with the Strangury; who in the midst of his torments could say, Oh my Lord God, how gracious hast thou beene unto me! thou hast given me eight and forty yeares of health, and now  
but

but two yeares of pain; thou mightest have caused me to lie in this torture all the dayes of my life; and now thou hast carried me comfortably through the rest, and hast meekly taken up with this last parcell of my torment; blessed be thy Name for thy mercy in forbearing me, and for thy justice in afflicting me. To be thankfull for present blessings is but ordinary, but be so thankfull for mercies past, that the memory of them should be able to put over the sense of present misery, is an high improvement of grace.

The very Heathens by the light of Nature and their own experience, could ob-

Livius.

serve this interchange of Gods proceedings; and made some kinde of use of them accordingly: *Camillus*, after he had upon ten yeares siege, taken the rich City *Veios*, prayed that some mishap might befall himselfe and Rome to temper so great an happinesse; when one would have thought the prize would not countervaille the labour, and the losse of time and bloud; And *Alexander* the great, when report was made to him of many notable Victories, atchieved by his Armies, could say; O *Iupiter*, mixe some misfortune with these happy news: Lo, these men could tell that it is neither fit, nor safe for  
great

great blessings to walk alone, but that they must be attended with their pages, afflictions; why should not we Christians expect them with patience, and thanks?

They say, Thunder and Lightning hurts not, if it be mixed with Raine. In those hot Counrries, which lie under the scalding Zone, when the first showres fall after a long drought, it is held dangerous to walk suddenly abroad; for that the earth so moistned sends up unwholsome steames; but in those parts vvhether the Raine and Sun-shine are usually interchanged, it is most pleasant to take the air of the earth newly refreshed with kindly showres; Nei-

E 5

ther

ther is it otherwise in the course of our lives ; this medley of good and evill conduces not a little to the health of our soules : One of them must serve to temper the other ; and both of them to keep the heart in order.

Were our afflictions long, and our comforts rare and short, we had yet reason to be thankfull ; the least is more then God owes us : but now, when if heavinesse endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning, and dwells with us, so, that some fits of sorrow are recompenced with many moneths of joy ; how should our hearts overflow with thankfulness, and easily digest

gest small grievances, out of the comfortable sense of larger blessing?

But if we shall cast up our eyes to Heaven, and there behold the glorious remuneration of our sufferings, how shall wee contemne the worst that earth can doe unto us? There, there is glory enough to make us a thousand times more then amends for all that we are capable to endure. Yea, if this Earth were Hell, and Men Devills, they could not inflict upon us those torments, which might hold any equality with the glory which shall be revealed; and even of the worst of them we must say with the blessed Apostle, Our light affliction

2 Cor. 4.  
17.

Acts 7.

affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, eternall weight of glory: When the blessed Proto-Martyr *Stephen* had stedfastly fixed his eyes on Heaven, and (that Curtain being drawn) had seene the Heavens opened, and therein the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; doe we think he cared ought for the sparkling eyes, and gnashed teeth, and killing stones of the enraged multitude? Oh poore impotent Jewes, how far was that divine soul above the reach of your malice? how did hee triumph over your cruelty? how did he by his happy evolution make all those stones precious?

SECT.



## S E C T. XVI.

*Confid. the examples of  
Contentation, both with-  
out, and within the Church  
of God.*

**L**Astly, it cannot but be a powerfull motive unto *Contentation*, that we lay before us the notable examples of men, whether worse, or better then our selves, that have beene eminent in the practice of this vertue; men, that out of the meere strength of morallity, have runne away with losses, and poverty as a light burthen; that out of their free choice have fallen upon these conditions

ditions, which we are ready to feare, and shrink from: What a shame is it for Christians to be out-stripped herein by very Pagans? if we looke upon the ancient Philosophers; their low valuation of these outward things, and their willing abdication of those comforts, wherewith others were too much affected, made them admired of the multitude; Here doe I see a Cynick housed in his Tub, scorning all wealth and state; and making still even with his Victualls, and the day; who, when he was invited to supper to one of *Alexanders* great Lords, could say; I had rather lick salt at *Athens*, then feast with

ἡμετέριος

with *Craterus* : Here I meet with him, whom their Oracle styled the wisest of men, walking bare-foot in a patcht thred-bare cloak, contemning honours, and all earthly things; and when that garment would hang no longer on his back, I can hear him say, I would have bought a Cloak, if I had had money; after which word, saith *Seneca*, whosoever offered to give, came too late; *Apollodorus*, amongst the rest, sends him a rich mantle towards his end, and is refused; With what patience doth this man bear the loud scoldings of his *Xantippe*? making no other of them, then the creaking of a Cart-wheel: with

with what brave resolution doth he repell the proffers of *Archelaus*, telling him how cheap the Market afforded meal at *Athens*, and the fountaines water? Here I meet with a *Zeno*, formerly rich in his traffique for purple, now impoverisht by an ill Sea-voyage, and can heare him say, I sailed best when I Ship-wrackt: Here I see an *Aristippus* drowning his gold in the Sea, that it might not drowne him: Here I can heare a *Democritus*, or *Cleanthes*, when he was asked how a man should be rich? answer; If he be poore in desires.

What should I speak of those Indian Sophists, that took

tooke their name from their nakednesse ; whom we hear to say ; The Sky is our House, and the Earth our Bed ; wee care not for gold, wee contemne death : One of them can tell *Onesicritus* ; As the Mother is to the Child , so is the Earth to mee ; The Mother gives Milk to her Infant ; so doth the Earth yeeld all necessities to me ; And when gold was offered to him , by that great Conquerour ; Perswade (said he) if thou canst these birds to take thy silver and gold , that they may sing the sweeter ; and if thou canst not doe that, wouldst thou have mee worse then them ? Adding moreover in a strong discourse ;

*Inter opera  
Ambrosii  
De moribus  
Brachman-  
norum.*

course; Naturall hunger, when we have taken food, ceaseth; and if the minde of man did also naturally desire gold, so soone as he hath received that which hee wished, the desire and appetite of it would presently cease; but so farre is it from this satiety, that the more it hath, the more it doth, without any intermission, long for more; because this desire proceeds not from any motion of nature, but only out of the wantonnesse of mans owne will, to which no bounds can be set. Blush, O Christian Soule (whosoever thou art, that readest these lines) to hear such words falling from Heathen lips, when thou seest

seest those that professe godlineffe, doat upon these worthlesse metals, and transported with the affection and cares of these earthly provisions.

If from these patterns of men that should bee below our selves, wee looke up to the more noble precedents of Prophets and Apostles; Lo, there we find *Elijah* fed by Ravens; *Elisha* boarding with his poore *Sareptan* Hostesse; An hundred Prophets fed by fifty in a Cave, with bread and water; The sons of the Prophets for the enlarging of their overstrait lodgiugs hard at work; they are their owne Carpenters, but their tools are borrowed; There wee shall

1 Kings  
18.13.

2 King. 6.  
2,3,4,5.

shall find a few barley loaves, and little fishes, the household provision of our Saviours train: Yea, there wee finde the most glorious Apostle, the great Doctor of the Gentiles, employing his hands to feed his belly; busily stitching of skins for his Tent-work; Yea, what doe we look at any or all of these, when we see the Son of God, the God of all the world, in the forme of a servant? Not a Cratch to cradle him in, not a grave to bury him in, was his owne; and he that could command Heaven and Earth, can say, The Foxes have holes, the Birds have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Who

Mat. 8. 20.



Who now can complaine of want, when he heares his Lord, and Saviour but thus provided for ? Hee could have brought downe with him a celestiall house, and have pitcht it here below, too glorious for earthen eyes to have lookt upon : Hee could have commanded all the pretious things that lye shrowded in the bowels of the Earth, to have made up a Majesticall Palace for him, to the dazling of the eyes of all beholders ; He could have taken up the stateliest Court that any earthly Monarch possessed, for his peculiar habitation : But his greatnesse was Spirituall and Heavenly ; and he that owned all would have

have nothing that he might sanctifie want unto us ; and that he might teach us by his blessed example, to sit downe contented with any thing, with nothing.

By that time therefore we have laid all these things together, and have seriously considered of the mean valuation of all these earthly things, for their transitorinesse, unsatisfaction, danger ; of the over-ruling Providence of the Almighty, who most wisely, justly, mercifully disposeth of us and all events that befall us ; of the worse condition of many thousand others ; of the great inconveniences that attend great and full estates ; of the secret benefits

fits of poverty ; of the smallness of that pittance that may suffice Nature ; of the miseries that wait upon discontentment ; of the mercifull vicissitudes of favors, wherewith God pleaseth to interchange our sufferings ; and lastly, the great examples of those, as well without, as within the bosome of the Church, that have gone before us, and led us the way to *Contentation*: our judgment cannot chuse but bee sufficiently convinced, that there is abundant reason to win our hearts to a quiet and contented entertainment of want, and all other outward afflictions.

S E C T.

## S E C T. XVII.

*Of contentment in death it self.*

**B**Ut all these intervenient miseries are sleight in comparison of the last, and utmost of evils ; Death ; Many a one grapples chearfully with these triviall afflictions, who yet lookes pale, and trembles at the King of Feare : His very Name hath terrour in it, but his lookes more : The couragious Champion of Christ , the blessed Apostle ; and with him, every faithfull Soul, makes his challenge universall, to whatsoever estate hee is in ; to the estate  
of

of Death, therefore no lesse then the afflictive incidence of life: When therefore this gastly Gyant shall stalk forth, and bid defiance to the whole Host of *Israel*; and when the timorous unbelievers shall run away at the sight of him, and endeavour to hide their heads from his presence; the good soul armed, not with the unmeet and combersome harnessse of flesh and bloud, but with the sure (though invisible) armour of God, dares come forth to meet him, and in the name of the Lord of Hosts, both bids him battle, and foiles him in the Combat, and now having laid him on the ground, can triumphingly

F                      say,

say, O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Five smooth pebbles there are, which if we carry in our scrip, we shall be able to quell, not only the power of Death, but the terror too.

Heb. 9. 27

Whereof the first is a sure apprehension of both the unavoidable necessity, and certain benefit of death: A necessity, grounded upon the just and eternall Decree of Heaven: It is appointed to all men once to die; and what a madnesse were it for a man to think of an exemption from the common condition of mankind? Mortality is, as it were, essentiall to our Nature; neither could we have had our souls

souls but upon the tearmes of a re-delivery, when they shall be called for; If the holiest Saints, or the greatest Monarchs sped otherwise, we might have some colour of repining: Now, grieve if thou wilt, that thou art a man; grieve not, that being man thou must die.

Neither is the benefit inferiour to the necessity; Lo here the remedy of all our cares, the physick for all our maladies, the rescue from all our feares and dangers, earnestly sued for by the painfull, dearly welcome to the distressed: Yea, lo here the Cherub that keeps the gate of Paradise; there is no entrance but un-

der his hand ; In vaine doe we hope to passe to the glory of Heaven, any other way then through the gates of Death.

The second is the Conscience of a well led life ; Guiltinesse will make any man cowardly, unable to looke danger in the face, much more Death ; whereas the innocent is bold as a Lyon : What a difference therefore there is betwixt a Martyr, and a Malefactor ; this latter knowes hee hath done ill, and therefore if hee can take his death but patiently, it is well ; the former knowes he hath done well, and therefore takes his death not patiently onely, but chearfully.

But



But because no mortall man can have so innocently led his life, but that hee shall have passed many offences against his most holy, and righteous God; here must be, Thirdly, a finall peace firmly made betwix God and the soule. Two powerfull agents must mediate in it; a lively Faith, and a serious Repentance; for those sins can never appeare against us, that are washed off with our teares; and being justified by faith wee have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if wee have made the Judge our friend, what can the Sergeant doe?

Rom. 5.1.

The fourth is the power, and efficacy of Christs

F 3 death

death applyed to the soule :  
 Wherefore died he, but that  
 we might live ? Wherefore  
 would he, who is the Lord  
 of life, dye, but to sanctifie,  
 season, and sweeten death to  
 us ? who would goe any  
 other way then his Saviour  
 went before him ? who can  
 feare that enemy, whom his  
 Redeemer hath conquered  
 for him ? who can run a-  
 way from that Serpent,  
 whose sting is pulled out ?  
 Oh Death, my Saviour  
 hath been thy death, and  
 therefore thou canst not be  
 mine,

The fifth is the comfor-  
 table expectation, and assu-  
 rance of a certain resurrecti-  
 on, and an immediate glory:  
 I doe but lay me downe to  
 my

my rest; I shall sleep quietly, and rise gloriously: My soule, in the meane time, no sooner leaves my body, then it enjoyes God; It did lately through my bodily eyes see my sad friends; that bad me farewell with their teares; now it hath the blisse-making vision of God; I am no sooner lanced forth, then I am at the haven; where I would be; Here is that which were able to make amends for a thousand deaths; a glory, infinite, eternall, incomprehensible.

This spirituall Ammunition shall sufficiently furnish the soule for her encounter with her last enemy; so as she shall not onely endure, but long for this Combat;

Phil. I. 23.

and say with the chosen Vessel, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.

### S E C T. XVIII.

*The miseries and inconveniences of the continued conjunction of the soul & body.*

**N**OW for that long conversation causeth entireness, and the parting of old friends and partners (such the soul and body are) but cannot be grievous, although there were no actual pain in the dissolution: It will be requisite for us, seriously to consider the state of this conjunction; and to enquire what good offices the one of them doth to the

the other, in their continued union, for which they should be so loath to part: And here we shall find that those two, however united to make up one person, yet (as it falls out in crosse matches) they are in continuall domestique jarres one with the other, and entertain a secret familiar kind of hostility betwixt themselves; For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. One sayes well, that if the body should implead the soule, it might bring many foule impeachments against it; and sue it for many great injuries done to that earthly part: And the soule againe

hath no fewer quarrels against the body: betwixt them both there are many brawles, no agreement. Our Schools have reckoned up therefore eight maine incommodities, which the soul hath cause to complain of in her conjunction with the body: whereof the first is the defilement of Originall sinne, wherewith the soul is not tainted as it proceeds, alone, from the pure hands of its Creator, but as it makes up a part of a son of *Adam*, who brought this guilt upon humane nature; so as now this composition, which we call man, is corrupt: Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is uncleane? saith *Iob.* The

*Iob. 14. 4.*

The second is a proneness to sin, which, but by the meeting of these partners had ever beene; the soule, if single, would have beene innocent; thus matched, what evill is it not apt to entertaine? An ill consort is enough to poyson the best disposition.

The difficulty of doing well is the third; for how averse are we by this conjunction from any thing that is good? This clog hinders us from walking roundly in the waies of God: The good that I would do, I doe not, saith the chosen Vessel.

Rom. 7.  
16.

The fourth is the dullness of our understanding, and the dimness of our mentall

mentall eyes, especially in the things pertaining unto God; which now we are forced to behold through the vaile of flesh: If therefore we mis-know, the fault is in the meane, through which we doe imperfectly discover them.

The fifth is a perpetuall impugnation, and self-conflict, either part labouring to oppose and vanquish the other. This field is fought in every mans bosome, without any possibility of peace, or truce, till the last moment of dissolution.

The sixt is the racking solicitude of cares, which continually distract the soul, not suffering it to rest at ease, whiles it carries this  
flesh



flesh above it.

The seventh is the multiplicity of passions which daily bluster within us, and raise up continuall tempests in our lives, disquieting our peace, and threatning our ruine.

The eight is the retardation of our glory; for flesh, and bloud cannot inherit the kingdome of God; wee must lay downe our load if wee would enter into Heaven: The seed cannot fructifie unlesse it dye. I cannot blame nature if it could wish not to bee unclothed, but to be clothed upon: but so hath the eternall wisdom ordered, that wee should first lay downe, ere wee can take up; and bee devested

2 Cor. 5.

*Of Contentation.*

devested of earth, ere we can partake of Heaven.

Now then, sith so many & great discommodities do so unavoidably accompany this match of soul and body, and all of them cease instantly in the act of their dissolution ; what reason have we to bee too deeply affected with their parting ? Yea, how should wee rather rejoyce that the houre is come, wherein wee shall bee quit both of the guilt, and temptations of sinne ; wherein the clogge shall bee taken away from our heeles, and the vail from our eyes ; wherein no intestine warres shall threaten us, no cares shall disquiet us, no passions shall torment us ; and lastly, where-

wherein we may take the free possession of that glory, which wee have hitherto lookt at onely a far off from the top of our *Pisgah*?

## SECT. XIX.

*Holy dispositions for Contentment : and first, Humility.*

**H**itherto we have dwelt in those powerfull considerations which may work us to a quiet contentment with whatsoever adverse estate, whether of life or death; after which we adresse our selves to those meet dispositions, which shall render us fully capable of this blessed *Contentation*; and shall make all these

these considerations effectu-  
all to that happy purpose.  
Whereof the first is true Hu-  
mility, under-valuing our  
selves, and setting an high  
rate upon every mercy that  
wee receive; For, if a man  
have attained unto this,  
that hee thinkes every thing  
too good for him, and him-  
selfe lesse then the least bles-  
sing, and worthy of the  
heaviest judgement; he can-  
not but sit downe thankfull  
for small favors, and meekly  
content with meane afflicti-  
ons: As contrarily, the  
proud man stands upon  
points with his Maker,  
makes God his debtor; looks  
disdainfully at small bles-  
sings; as if hee said, What,  
no more? and lookes anger-  
ly

ly at the least crosses; as if hee said, Why thus much? The Father of the faithfull hath practically taught us this Lesson of humility; who comes to God with dust and ashes in his mouth: And the Jewish Doctors tell us truly, that in every Disciple of *Abraham*, there must be three things: a good eye, a meeke spirit, and an humble soule; His Grand-child *Jacob*, the Father of every true Israelite, had well taken it out; whiles hee can say to his God, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: And indeed, in whomsoever it be, the best measure of  
Grace

Gen 18. 27

Pirk A.  
vorb.

Gen. 32, 10

Prov. 3. 34

Jam. 4. 6.

Grace is Humility; for the more grace still, the greater Humility; and no Humility, no Grace: *Salomon* observed of old; and *Saint James* tooke it from him, That God resisteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble; so as hee that is not humble, is not so much as capable of Grace, and hee that is truly humble is a fit subject for all Graces, and amongst the rest for the Grace of *Contentation*: Give mee a man therefore, that is vile in his owne eyes, that is sensible of his owne wretchednesse, that knowes what it is to sin, and what belongs to that sinne whereof hee is guilty; this man shall thinke it a mercy that

that hee is any where out of Hel; shall account all the evils that he is free from, so many new favors; shall reckon easie corrections amongst his blessings; and shall esteem any blessing infinitely obliging. Whereas contrarily, the proud begger is ready to throw Gods almes at his head, and swels at every lash, that hee receives from the divine hand. Not without great cause, therefore doth the royall Preacher oppose the patient in spirit, to the proud in spirit; for the proud man can no more be patient, then the patient can be discontent with whatsoever hand of his God. Every toy puts the proud man beside his pati-

Eccles. 7. 8.

patience : if but a flie bee found in *Pharaohs* cup, he is straight in rage , ( as the Jewish tradition layes the quarrell ) and sends his Butler into durance : And if the Emperour doe but mistake the Stirrup of our Countreyman Pope *Adrian*, hee shall dance attendance for his Crowne : If a *Mardochee* doe but faile of a courtesie to *Haman* , all Jews must bleed to death ; And how unquiet are our vain Dames, if this curle bee not set right, or that pinne mis-placed ? But the meek spirit is incurious ; and so thoroughly subacted, that hee takes his load from God ( as the Camel from his Master ) upon his knees : And for men if they



they compell him to goe one mile, he goes twain; if they smite him on the right check, he turnes the other; if they sue away his Coat, hee parts with his Cloake also.

Mat. 5. 39,  
40.

*Heraclius* the Emperour, when hee was about to passe through the golden gate, and to ride in royall state through the streets of Jerusalem, being put in mind by *Zacharias* the Bishop there, of the humble and dejected fashion wherein his Saviour walked through those streets, towards his passion, strips off his rich robes, laies aside his Crown, and with bare head, and bare feet, submissively paces the same way that his Redeemer

deemer had carryed his Crosse towards his *Golgotha*. Every true Christian is ready to tread in the deepe steps of his Saviour, as well knowing that if hee should descend to the Gates of Death, of the Grave of Hell, hee cannot bee so humbled, as the Son of God was for him: And indeed, this, and this alone, is the true way to glory; He that is Truth it selfe, hath told us, that hee who humbles himselfe shall bee exalted; And wise *Solomon*, Before honour is humility. The Fuller reads upon that cloth which hee meanes to whiten: And hee that would see the stars by day, must not climb up into some high

Pro. 15. 33

high Mountain, but must descend to the lower Cels of the earth. Shortly, who-soever would raise up a firm building of *Contentation*, must be sure to lay the foundation of Humility.

## S E C T. XX.

*Of a faithfull self-resignation.*

**S**Econdly, to make up a true contentment with the most adverse estate, there is required a faithfull self-resignation into the hands of that God, whose we are; who, as he hath more right in us, then our selves, so he best knows what to doe with us: How graciously hath

Phil. 4. 6.

hath his mercy invited us to our owne ease? Be carefull (saith he) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: wee are naturally apt in our necessities to have recourse to greater powers then our owne; even where wee have no engagement of their help; how much more should wee cast our selves upon the Almighty, when hee not onely allows, but solicits our reliance upon him? It was a question that might have befitted the mouth of the best Christian, which fell from *Socrates*, Since God himselfe is carefull for thee, why art thou

thou solicitous for thy self ?  
If evils were let loose upon  
us, so as it were possible for  
us to suffer any thing that  
God were not aware of, we  
might have just cause to sink  
under adversities ; but now,  
that we know every dream  
of our affliction is weighed  
out to us, by that all-wise,  
and all-mercifull Provi-  
dence ; Oh our infidelity, if  
we doe make scruple of ta-  
king in the most bitter dose !  
Here then is the right use of  
that main duty of Christi-  
anity, to live by faith : Brute  
creatures live by sense, meer  
men by reason, Christians  
by faith. Now, faith is the  
substance of things hoped  
for ; the evidence of things  
not seene ; in our extremi-  
ties

Heb. 11. 1.

ties we hope for Gods gracious deliverance, faith gives a subsistence to that deliverance, before it be: The mercies that God hath reserved for us, do not yet shew themselves, faith is the evidence of them, though yet unseene: It was the Motto of the learned and godly Divine Mr. Perkins, *Fidei vita vera vita*; The true life, is the life of faith; a word which that worthy servant of God did both write and live; neither indeed is any other life truly virall, but this, for hereby we enjoy God in all whatsoever occurrences: Are we abridged of means? we feed upon the cordiall Promise of our God: Doe we  
 sigh

sigh and groan under varieties of grievous persecutions: out of the worst of them we can pick out comforts; whiles we can heare our Saviour say, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the Kingdome of Heaven; Are we deserted, and abandoned of friends? we see him by us, who hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: Doe we droop under spirituall desertions? we heare the God of truth say; For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee; In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy

Mat. 5. 10.

Heb. 13. 5.

Esa. 54.  
7, 8.

Pfal. 139. 8  
9.

Ver. 10. 11.

Pf. 68. 20.

on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer: Are we driven from home? If we take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the Sea; even there also shall thine hand lead us, and thy right hand shall hold us: are we dungeon'd up from the sight of the Sun? Peradventure the darknesse shall cover us; but then shall our night be turned into day; yea, the darknesse is no darknesse with thee: Are we cast downe upon the bed of sicknesse? Hee that is our God, is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

It cannot be spoken how injurious those men are to them-



themselves, that will be managing their owne cares, and plotting the prevention of their feares; and projecting their own, both indemnity, and advantages; for, as they lay an unnecessary load upon their owne shoulders; so they draw upon themselves the miseries of an unremediable disappointment; *Alas, how can their weakness make good those events which they vainly promise to themselves, or avert those judgements they would escape, or uphold them in those evils they must undergoe?* Whereas if we put all this upon a gracious God, he contrives it with ease; looking for nothing from us, but our trust, and thankfulness.      *Sect.*

## S E C T. XXI.

*Of true inward riches.*

**I**N the third place, it will be most requisit to furnish the soule with true inward riches; I mean not of meer morall vertues, (which yet are truly precious when they are found in a good heart) but of a wealth as much above them, as gold is above drosse; Yea, as the thing which is most precious, is above nothing: And this shall be done, if we bring Christ home to the soul; if we can possesse our selves of him, who is God al-sufficient; For, such infinite contentment there is in the Son of God made ours, that  
who-

whofoever hath tasted of the sweetneffe of this comfort, is indifferent to all earthly things; and insensible of those extreame differences of events, wherewith others are perplexed; How can he be dejected with the want of any thing, who is possessed of him that possesseth all things? How can he be over-affected with triviall profits, or pleasures, who is taken up with the God of all comfort? Is Christ mine therefore? How can I fail of all contentment? How can he complaine to want light, that dwels in the midst of the Sun? How can he complain of thirst, out of whose belly flow rivers of living water? What can

Joh. 7.38.

Joh. 6. 55.

Ro. 13. 14.

Rev. 22. 2.

Ps. 62. 6, 7.

Phil. 4. 1.

I wish, that my Christ is not to me? Would I have meat and drink? My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeede: Would I have clothing? But, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, saith the Apostle: Would I have medicine? He is the Tree of life, the leaves whereof are for the healing of the Nations: Would I have safety, and protection? He truly is my strength, and my salvation; he is my defence, so as I shall not fall; In God is my health and my glory; the Rock of my might, and in God is my trust: Would I have direction? I am the way, and the truth: Would I have life? Christ is to me

me to live ; I am the Resurrection and the Life : Would I have all spirituall good things ? VVee are in Christ Jesus , who of God is made unto us Wisdome , and Righteousnesse , and Sanctification, and Redemption.

Oh the happy condition of the man that is in Christ, and hath Christ in him ! Shall I account him rich, that hath store of Oxen, and Sheep, and Horses, and Camells ; that hath heaps of metals, and some spots of ground ; and shall I not account him infinitely more rich that ownes and enjoyes him whose the earth is , and the fulnesse of it ; whose Heaven is, and

Rev. 3. 23.

the glory of it : Shall I justly account that man great, whom the King will honour, and place neare to himselfe; and shall I not esteeme that man more honourable, whom the King of Heaven is pleased to admit unto such Partnership of glory, as to professe; To him that overcommeth will I grant to sit with me in my Throae, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne :

It is a true word of Saint *Augustine*, that every soul is either Christs Spouse, or the Devils Harlot : Now if we be matched to Christ, the Lord of glory; what a blessed union is here :  
 What

What can hee withhold from us, that hath given us himselfe? I could envy the devotion of that man (though otherwise mis-placed) whom *S. Bernard* heard to spend the night in no other words, then, *Deus meus & omnia*; My God, and all things; Certainly, he who hath that God, hath more then all things; hee that wants him (what ever else he seems to possess) hath lesse then nothing.

## S E C T. XXII.

*Holy resolutions: 1. That our present estate is best for us.*

**A**fter these serious considerations, and meet dispositions

positions, shall in the last follow certaine firme resolutions for the full actuating our contentment: And first, we must resolve (out of the unfailable grounds of divine Providence, formerly spoken of) that the present estate wherein wee are, is certainly the best for us; and therefore we must herein absolutely captivate our understanding, and will, to that of the Highest: How unmeet Judges are flesh and bloud of the best fittest of a condition for us? As some palates (which are none of the wholsomest) like nothing but sweet meats, so our nature would be fed up with the onely delicacies of pleasures, and prosperity; according



according to the false principle of *Aristippus*, that he onely is happy which is delighted; but the all-wise God knows another diet more fit for our health, and therefore graciously tempers our dishes with the tart sauces of affliction: The mother of the two sons of *Zebedee*, and her ambitious children, are all for the chief Peerage in the Temporall kingdome of Christ; but hee calls them to a bitter Cup, and a bloudy Baptisme rather; and this was a farre greater honour then that they sued for: There is no earthly estate absolutely good for all persons; like as no gale can serve for all passengers. In *Africk*, they say, the North

Esa. 28, 27

Northwinde brings Clouds,  
 and the South winde cleares  
 up : That plant, which was  
 starved in one soile, in ano-  
 ther prospers ; Yea, that  
 which in some climate is  
 poyson, proves wholesome  
 in another : Some one man,  
 if he had anothers blessings,  
 would run wilde ; and if hee  
 had some other mans crosses,  
 would be desperate ; The in-  
 finite wisdom of the great  
 Governour of the world al-  
 lots every one his due pro-  
 portion ; The fitches are not  
 threshed with a threshing in-  
 strument, neither is a Carr-  
 wheele turned about upon  
 the Cummin ; but the fi-  
 ches are beaten out with a  
 staffe, and the Cummin  
 with a rod, saith *Esay* : And  
 no

no otherwise in matter of prosperity; *Josephs* Coat may be party-coloured, and *Benjamins* messc may be five times so much as any of his brethren. It is marvell if they who did so much envy *Joseph* for his dream of superiority, did not also envy *Benjamin* for so large a service, and so rich gifts at his parting; this it seemes gave occasion for the good *Patriarchs* fear, when hee charged them, See that you fall not out by the way; But, there had been no reason for so impotent an envy; whiles the gift is free, and each speeds above his desert, who can have cause to repine? It is enough that *Joseph* knew a just reason  
of

Gen. 43.  
34.

Gen. 45.  
24.

of so unequall a distribution, though it were hidden from themselves. The elder brother may grudge the fat Calfe, and the prime Robe to the returned Unthrift, but the father knows reason to make that difference. God is infinitely just, and infinitely mercifull in dispensing both his favours and punishment. In both kinds every man hath that which is fittest for him, because it is that which Gods will hath designed to him; and that will is the most absolute rule of justice: now if wee can so frame our will to his, as to thinke so too, how can wee be other then contented? Doe we suffer? There is more intended to us

us then our smart : It was a good speech of *Seneca*, though an Heathen, (what pity it is that he was so ? ) I give thanks to my infirmity, which forces mee not to bee able to doe that, which I ought not will to doe ; If wee lose without, so as wee gaine within ; if in the perishing of the outward man, the inward man be renewed, wee have no cause to complain, much to rejoyce : Doe I live in a meane estate ? If it were better, I should bee worse ; more proud, more carelesse ; and what a wooll improvement were this ? What a strange creature would man bee, if hee were what hee would wish himselfe ? Surely he would be

2 Cor. 4. 16

bee wickedly pleasant, carelessly prophane, vainly proud, proudly oppressive, dissolutely wanton, impetuously selfe-willed; and shortly, his owne Idoll, and his owne Idolater: His Maker knowes how to frame him better; it is our ignorance and unthankfulness, if wee submit not to his good pleasure: To conclude, wee pray every day, *Thy will bee done*; What hypocrites are wee, if wee pray one thing, and act another? If wee murmur at what wee wish? All is well betweene Heaven and us, if we can think our selves happy to bee what God will have us.

SECT.

## S E C T. XXIII.

## 2. Resolution to abate of our desires.

SEcondly, wee must resolve to abate of our desires; for it is the illimitednesse of our ambitious, and covetous thoughts, that is guilty of our unquietnesse; Every man would be, and have more then hee is; and is therefore sick of what hee is not. It was a true word of *Democritus*, If wee desire not much, wee shall thinke a little much: and it is suitable to one of the rules of *S. Augustine*; It is better to neede lesse, then to have more: *Paul*, the richest poor man, (as *Ambrose* well) could:

*Ambros. de  
vitiis  
& virtutibus  
conflictu.*

*Pr. 30. 15.*

*Job 38. 11.*

could say, As having all things, yet possessing nothing: It is not for a Christian to bee of the Dragons temper, which they say is so ever thirsty, that no water will quench his drought; and therefore never hath his mouth shut; nor, with the daughters of the horse-leach to cry alwaies, Give, give; Hee must confine his desires; and that, to no over large compasse; and must say to them, as God doth to the Sea, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

What a cumber it is for a man to have too much? to bee in the case of *Surena* the Parthian Lord, that could



could never remove his family with lesse then a thousand Camels? What is this, but Tortoise-like to bee clogg'd with a weighty shel, which we cannot drag after us, but with paine? Or like the Ostrich, to bee so held downe with an heavy body that wee can have no use of our wings? Whereas the nimble Lark rises, & mounts with ease, and sings chearfully in her flight. How many have wee known, that have found too much flesh a burden? and when they have found their bloud too ranke, have been glad to pay for the letting it out? It was the word of that old and famous Lord Keeper *Bacon*, the eminent head of  
a

a noble, and witty family, *Mediocria firma* : There is neither safety, nor true pleasure in excess: It was a wise and just answer of *Zeno* the Philosopher, who reproving the superfluity of a Feast, and hearing by way of defence that the maker of it was a great rich man, and might well spare it, said; If thy Cook shall over-salt thy broth, and when hee is chid for it, shall say, I have store enough of salt lying by me, wouldst thou take this for a fair answer?

Pro. 24. 13

My Son, eat thou honey, saith *Solomon*, because it is good: but, to be sure, for the preventing all immoderation, hee adds soon after; Hast thou found honey? eat so

Pro. 25. 16

so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith : if our appetite carry us too far, wee may easily surfet ; this (which is the embleme of pleasure) must bee tasted (as *Dyonisius* the Sophist said of old) on the tip of the finger ; not bee sup't up in the hollow of the hand ; It is with our desires, as it is with weak stomachs, the quantity offends, even where the food is not unwholsome ; and if heed bee not taken, one bit draws on another, till nature be overlaid ; Both pleasures and profits (if way bee given to them) have too much power to debauch the minde, and to work it to a kind of insatiablenesse ; there is a thirst that

that is caused with drunkenness; and the wanton appetite, like as they said of *Messalina*, may be wearied, but cannot be satisfied; It is good therefore to give austere repulses to the first overtures of inordinate desires, and to give strong denials to the first unruly motions of our hearts; For, *S. Chrysostome* well; pleasure is like a dog; which being coyed, and stroaked, follows us at the heels, but if rated, and beaten off is driven away from us with ease.

It is for the Christian heart to be taken up with other desires, such as wherein there can be no danger of immoderatenesse: These are  
the

the holy longings after grace and goodnesse; This onely covetousnesse, this ambition is pleasing to God, and infinitely beneficiall to the soule. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall bee filled: Spirituall blessings are the true riches, whereof we can never have enough. *S. Ambrose* said truly, No man is indeed wealthy, that cannot cary away what he hath with him: What is left behind, is not ours, but other mens: Condemne thou whiles thou art alive, that which thou canst not enjoy when thou art dead.

Mat. 5. 6.

*Ambros.*  
*Epist. 27.*

As for this earthly trash,  
and the vaine delights of the  
H                      flesh,

flesh, which wee have so fondly doted on; we cannot carry them indeed away with us, but the sting of the guilty mis-enjoying of them will be sure to stick by us; and, to our sorrow, attend us both in Death and Judgment; in summe therefore, if we would bee truly contented, and happy, our hearts can never be enough enlarged in our desires of spiritual and heavenly things, never too much contracted in our desires of earthly.

S E C T.

## S E C T. XXIV.

3. *Resol. to inure our selves to digest smaller discontentments.*

**O**Ur third resolution must bee to inure our selves to digest smaller discontentments; and by the exercise thereof to enable our selves for greater: as those that drink medicinall waters, beginne first with smaller quantities, & by degrees arise, at last, to the highest of their prescribed measure; or as the wise *Lacedemonians*, by early scourgings of their boyes, inured them in their riper years to more painfull sufferings: A strong *Milo* takes up his Calf

at first, and by continuall practice is now able to cary it when it is grown a Bull.

Such is our self-love, that we affect ever to be served of the best; and that we are apt to take great exceptions at small failings: We would walk always in smooth, and even paths, and would have no hindrances in our passage; but, there is no remedy, we must meet with rubs; and perhaps crosse shinnes, and take falls too in our way: Every one is willing and desirous to enjoy (as they say the City of *Rhodes* doth) a perpetuall Sunshine; but we cannot (if we be wise) but know, that we must meet with change of weather; with rainy days, & some-



sometimes storms and tempests ; it must be our wisdom to make provision accordingly : and some whiles to abide a wetting ; that, if need be, wee may endure a drenching also. It was the policy of *Jacob*, when he was to meet with his brother *Esau*. (whom he feared an enemy, but found a friend) to send the droves first, then his hand-maids, and their children ; then *Leah*, with her children, and at last, came *Joseph* and *Rachel* ; as one that would adventure the lesse dear in the first place, and (if it must be) to prepare himself for his dearest losse. *S. Pauls* companions in his perilous Sea-voyage, first lighten the Ship

Gen. 32.  
26. & 33.  
5, 6. &c.

Act. 27.  
18, 19..

of lesse necessaries, then they cast out the tackling, then the wheat; and in the last place, themselves. It is the use that wise *Socrates* made of the sharp tongues of his crosse and unquiet wives, to prepare his patience for publique sufferings. Surely, hee that cannot endure a frown, will hardly take a blow; and hee that doubles under a light crosse, will sinke under a heavier; and contrarily, that good Martyr prepares his whole body for the Faggot, with burning his hand in the Candle. I remember *Seneca*, in one of his Epistles, rejoyces much to tell with what patient temper he took it, that coming unexpectedly to his  
Country-

Country-house, hee found all things so discomposed, that no provision was ready for him ; finding more contentment in his owne quiet apprehension of these wants, then trouble in that unreadinesse: And thus, should we be affected upon all occasions ; Those that promised me help, have disappointed me : that friend, on whom I relyed, hath failed my trust: the sum that I expected, comes not in at the day : my servant slackens the businesse injoynd him : the Beast that I esteemed highly, is lost : the Vessel in which I shipped some commodities, is wrackt: my diet and attendance must be abated ; I must be dislodg-

ed of my former habitati-  
on ? how doe I put over  
these occurrences ? If I can  
make light worke of these  
lesser crosses, I am in a good  
posture to entertain greater.

To this purpose, it will be  
not a little expedient, to  
thwart our appetite in those  
things wherein we placed  
much delight ; and to tor-  
ture our curiosity in the de-  
lay of those contentments,  
which we too eagerly affe-  
cted : It was a noble and  
exemplary government of  
these passions, which wee  
finde in King *David*, who  
being extreemly thirsty, and  
longing for a speedy refresh-  
ment, could say, Oh that one  
would give me drink of the  
water of the Well of Bethle-  
hem !

2 Sam. 23.  
15, 16, 17.

hem ! but when he saw that water purchased with the hazard of the lives of three of his Worthies, when it was brought to him, he would not drink it, but poured it out unto the Lord.

Have I a minde to some one curious dish above the rest ? I will put my knife to my throat, and not humour my palate so far as to taste of it : Doe I receive a Letter of newes from a farre Countrey, over night ? It shall keep my pillow warm till the morning : Doe my importunate recreations call mee away ? they shall, against the hair, be forcibly adjourned till a further leisure : Out of this ground it was, that the ancient Vo-

taries observed such austerity, and rigour in their diet, clothes, lodging; as those that knew how requisite it is that nature should be held short of her demands; & continually exercised with denials, lest shee grow too wanton, and impetuous in her desires: That which was of old given as a rule to Monastick persons, is fit to be extended to all Christians; They may not have a will of their owne, but must frame themselves to such a condition, and carriage, as seems best to their Superiour; If therefore it please my God to send mee some little comfort, I shall take that as an earnest of more; and if he exercise me

with lesser crosses, I shall take them as preparatives to greater; and endeavour to be thankfull for the one, and patient in the other; and contented with Gods hand in both.

## SECT. XXV.

4. *Resol. to be frequent and fervent in prayer.*

**O**ur last resolution must be, to be frequent and fervent in our prayers to the Father of all mercies, that hee will be pleased to work our hearts by the power of his Spirit, to this constant state of *Contentation*; without which we can neither consider the things that be-  
long

Phil. 4. 6.

long to our inward peace, nor dispose our selves towards it, nor resolve ought for the affecting it: without which, all our Considerations, all our dispositions, all our resolutions, are vain and fruitlesse. Justly therefore doth the blessed Apostle, after his charge of avoiding all carefulnesse for these earthly things, enforce the necessity of our Prayers and Supplications, and making our requests known unto God; who both knows our need, and puts these requests into our mouthes: When wee have all done, they are the requests of our hearts, that must free them from cares, and frame them to a perfect content-



contentment : There may be a kind of dull and stupid neglect, which possessing the soul may make it insensible of evil events, in some naturall dispositions ; but a true temper of a quiet and peaceable estate of the soul upon good grounds can never bee attained without the inoperation of that holy Spirit, from whom every good gift, and every perfect giving proceedeth : It is here contrary to these earthly occasions : with men, he that is ever craving, is never contented ; but with God, he cannot want contentment that prays always. If wee bee not unacquainted with our selves, we are so conscious of our own

Jam. i. i

owne weaknesse, that wee know every puffle of temptation is able to blow us over; they are onely our prayers that must stay us from being carried away with the violent assaults of discontentment; under which, a praying soule can no more miscarry, then an indevout soule can enjoy safety.

### S E C T. XXVI.

*The difficulty of knowing how to abound, and the ill consequences of not knowing it.*

**L** Et this be enough for the remedy of those distempers which arise from an adverse condition; As for

for prosperity, every man thinks himselfe wise and able enough to know how to govern it, and himselfe in it; an happy estate (wee imagine) will easily manage it self, without too much care; Give mee but Sea-roome, saith the confident Mariner, and let me alone, what ever tempest arise: Surely, the great Doctor of the Gentiles had never made this holy boast of his divine skill, [I know how to abound] if it had beene so easie a matter as the world conceives it: Meere ignorance, and want of selfe-experience, is guilty of this error.

Many a one abounds in wealth and honour, who bounds

bounds no lesse in miseries and vexation : Many a one is caried away with an unruly greatnesse, to the destruction of body, soul, estate. The world abounds every where with men that doe abound, and yet doe not know how to abound : and those especially in three ranks ; The proud the covetous, the prodigall ; The proud is thereby transported to forget God ; the covetous, his neighbour ; the prodigall, himselfe.

Both wealth and honour are of a swelling nature ; raising a man up not above others, but above himselfe ; equalling him to the powers immortall, yea, exalting him above all that is called,

called God ; Oh that vile  
dust and ashes should bee  
raised to that height of in-  
solence as to hold contesta-  
tion with its Maker ! Who  
is the Lord ? saith the King  
of Egypt : I shall be like to  
the Highest ; I am, and  
there is none besides mee,  
saith the King of Babylon ;  
The voice of God, and not  
of Man, goes downe with  
*Herod* : And how will that  
Spirit trample upon men,  
that dare vie with the Al-  
mighty ? Hence are all the  
heavy oppressions, bloody  
tyrannies, imperious domi-  
neerings, scornfull insulta-  
tions, mercilesse outrages,  
that are so rife amongst  
men, even from hence, that  
they know not how to a-  
bound. The

Exod. 5. 2.

Esa. 14. 14.

A&amp; 12. 22.

Eccl. 5. 13.

The covetous man abounds with bags, and no lesse with sorrows; verifying the experience of wise *Solomon*; There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun, riches kept for the owners thereof, to their hurt; what he hath got with injustice, hee keeps with care, leaves with grief, and reckons for with torment; I cannot better compare these Money-mongers then to Bees; they are busie gatherers, but it is for themselves; their Masters can have no part of their honey till it be taken from them; and they have a sting ready for every one that approaches their Hive; and their lot at the last is burning.

What

What maceration is there here with feares, and jealousies; what cruell extortion, and oppression exercised upon others: and all from no other grounds then this, that they know not how to abound:

The prodigall feasts and sports like an *Athenian*, spends like an Emperour; and is ready to say as *Helioabalus* did of old, Those cares are best, that cost dearest; caring more for an empty reputation of a short gallantry, then for the comfortable subsistence of himself, his family, his posterity: Like *Cleopes* the vaine Egyptian King, which was fain to prostitute his daughter for the finishing of his Pyra-

*Ælius  
Lamprid.*

Pyramid : This man lavisheth out not his own meanes alone , but his poor neighbours ; running upon the score with all trades that concern back or belly ; undoing more with his debts, then he can pleasure with his entertainments ; none of all which should be done, if he knew how to abound.

Great skill therefore is required to the governing of a plentiful and prosperous estate, so as it may be safe and comfortable to the owner, and beneficiall unto others. Every Corporall may know how to order some few files, but to marshal many Troops in a Regiment, many Regiments in a whole body of an Army, requires



requiers the skil of an experienced Generall. But the rules and limits of Christian moderation, in the use of our honours, pleasures, profits, I have at large laid forth in a former Discourse; thither I must crave leave to send the benevolent Reader; beseeching God to blesse unto him these and all other labours, to the happy furtherance of his  
Grace and Salvation. *Amen.*

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**FINIS.**

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